

## SPECIAL MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

March 7, 2012

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the special meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

### I. CALL TO ORDER

Present: Keane, Kochenburger, Lindsey, Moran, Paterson, Paulhus, Ryan, Schaefer, Shapiro

Also Present: Richard Lawrence of Lawrence Associates, Tom DiMauro of Newfield Construction, Superintendent of Schools Fred Baruzzi

### II. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Joan Buck, Sumner Drive, read a statement for the record in support of Option A Enhanced. (Statement attached)

Steve Lanza, Hillyndale Road, spoke in support of using the existing Goodwin School as a site no matter which option is approved. (Statement attached)

Kyle Stearns, Stearns Road, reported his educational experience at Vinton School was the best and supports upgrading the 3 schools. Mr. Stearns stated this is a small community which has small schools built by local contractors.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, urged approval of Option A not enhanced paid for by cash. Mr. Hossack also questioned the revenue estimates presented in the HR&A report.

David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, reiterated his concern with debt and urged renovations without enhancements. Mr. Freudmann also predicted the parking garage would be unloaded on the Town after the initial 7 year period.

Councilor Carl Schaefer read a letter from his granddaughter Carly H. Schaefer in support of the Southeast School site. (Statement attached)

Lisa Eaton, Charles Lane, asked for a tally of the speakers at the public hearing in favor of the different options and expressed concern with the number of potential voters who do not pay taxes who might vote if the school building project is on the November ballot.

Amy Lapsis, Candide Lane, asked if accommodations have been made for preschool rooms in the proposed new school option, especially if the program is mandated.

Bill Caneria, Candide Lane, has collected surveys from Vinton parents regarding their preference for a new or existing school. Mr. Caneria will forward the results to the Council.

Jessica Higham, Adeline Place, commented on a recent trend in towns to provide family resource centers and asked if the Council considered this possibility in the design of the new schools. These centers are funded in new construction only.

Alison Hilding, Southwood Road, was troubled by the suggestion that the results of the surveys emailed to Mr. Caneria should not be added to the record without individual permission.

Jay Rueckl, South Eagleville Road and a member of the school board, has been struck with how much people in Town care about education and urged support for the 2 new schools which will be the only way to provide educational benefits, operational savings and mitigate the effect of declining enrollments.

### III. OLD BUSINESS

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Superintendent Baruzzi reported in each new school there will be room for 2 preschool classrooms and while no space has been allocated for a community resource center the Town could consider doing so. Currently those services are provided by Youth Services and the school nurses. Also dedicated bathrooms in the early grades could be considered.

Mr. Ryan, in response to a citizen request, noted his unofficial score card indicated 19 speakers at the public hearing were in favor of maintaining the 3 schools and 15 in favor of 2 new schools.

Architect Rick Lawrence presented a memo outlining his concerns with the PowerPoint for Option A offered at the public hearing on March 5, 2012. (Statement attached)

Council members discussed the diversity of opinions as evidenced by the public hearing and the probability of the referendum reaching the required 15% favorable vote.

Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Shapiro seconded to send the proposal for the construction of two new schools, at sites to be determined prior to the referendum, to a referendum in November of 2012.

Mr. Shapiro offered the following amendment, "Prior to that vote staff will provide cost, with as much precision as possible, for the use of Goodwin as a school site including acquisition cost and other site work, including but not limited to a new septic system, that might be needed." Mr. Ryan agreed to the inclusion of the amendment in his motion.

Council members discussed the role of the Council in the decision making process, the advisability of a straw vote prior to the referendum, the splitting out of the Middle School Project, and the value of the public comments to date.

Mr. Paulhus left the meeting to go to work at 7:35 p.m.

Ms. Moran requested the words, "preliminary" be added to the amended motion. The inclusion of the Middle School Project was also added to the amended motion.

Agreed to by Mr. Ryan the motion now reads:

Move to send the preliminary proposal for the construction of two new schools, at sites to be determined prior to the referendum, and the Mansfield Middle School project to a referendum in November of 2012. Prior to that vote staff will provide cost, with as much precision as possible, for the use of Goodwin as a school site including acquisition cost and other site work, including but not limited to a new septic system, that might be needed.

Council discussion ensued regarding the efforts of the Council to increase the tax base, the economic struggles of residents and the reliability of the cost saving estimates. Director of Facilities Bill Hammon provided an explanation of the energy cost savings.

Mr. Shapiro called the question, seconded, the motion passed with all present in favor except Ms. Keane and Ms. Lindsey who voted no.

The motion as amended passed with Mr. Kochenburger, Ms. Moran, Ms. Paterson, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Schaefer and Mr. Shapiro in favor and Ms. Keane and Ms. Lindsey in opposition.

Mr. Shapiro moved to authorize the expenditure of funds, not to exceed \$40,000, for appropriate testing at the Goodwin School and Vinton School sites to determine the adequacy of the property for septic systems.

The motion passed with Mr. Kochenburger, Ms. Moran, Ms. Paterson, Mr. Ryan, and Mr. Shapiro in favor, Ms. Keane and Ms. Lindsey in opposition and Mr. Schaefer abstaining.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Shapiro seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 P.M.

Motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth C. Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

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